EPILEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION

BY

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Prolegomena, Themis, Alpha and Omega, etc.

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TO

HOPE

IN REMEMBRANCE OF
SPANISH NIGHTS AND DAYS

ای دل ز غبار جسم اگر پاك شوی
تو روح مجردی بر افلاك شوی
عرش است نشیمن تو شرمت بادا
كائی و مقیم خطهء خاك شوی

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PREFACE

THESE *Epilegomena* are the sequel to my two books *Prolegomena* and *Themis*. I have tried here to summarize as briefly as possible the results of many years' work on the origins of Greek Religion, and to indicate the bearing of these results on religious questions of to-day.

For the new material offered I am largely indebted to the psychological work of Jung and Freud and to the less well known writings of the greatest of Russian philosophers Vladímir Solovióv.

J. E. H.

NEWNHAM COLLEGE.
July 29, 1921.

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I

PRIMITIVE RITUAL

ἔφυγον κακὸν εὗρον ἄμεινον

The little township of Chaeronea in Boeotia, Plutarch's birthplace, saw enacted year by year a strange and very ancient ceremonial[1]. It was called "The Driving out of Famine"[2]. A household slave was driven out of doors with rods of *agnus castus*, a willow-like plant, and over him were pronounced the words "Out with Famine, in with Health and Wealth." The Archon for the year performed the ceremony at the Common Hearth which was in intent the Town Hall of the community and each householder performed it separately for his own house. Plutarch himself performed it at the Common Hearth when he was Archon. There was present, he tells us, a large concourse of people and when all was over he and his friends discussed the matter at dinner.

I have chosen this ceremony out of thousands of others because it expresses with singular directness and simplicity what is, I think, the very pith and marrow of primitive religion. The religious impulse is directed, if I am right, primarily to one end and one only, *the conservation and promotion of life*. This end is served in two ways, one negative, one positive, by the riddance of whatever is conceived to be hostile and by the enhancement of whatever is conceived of as favourable to life. Religious rites are primarily of two kinds and two only, of *expulsion* and *impulsion*. Primitive man has before him, in order that he may live, the old dual task to get rid of evil, to secure good. Evil is to him of course mainly hunger and barrenness. Good is food and fertility. The Hebrew word for "good" meant originally good to eat[3]. The word was primarily applied to ripe fruits; it meant luscious, succulent. Hunger and barrenness he tries by endless varying rites to carry out, to expel, to kill; he curses it, he mourns over it, he has ceremonies

[1] Plut. *Symp.* VI. 8. 1.

[2] "καλεῖται δὲ βουλίμου ἔξέλασις." Βούλιμος is sometimes translated "Ox-hunger," but from Plutarch's discussion with his friends it is clear that this may be mere popular etymology. They agreed however that the strange archaic word meant a great and public famine.

[3] See J. E. Harrison, *Themis*, pp. 139, 280.

of death and lamentation (πένθεα). Food and fertility and growth he welcomes, he rejoices over; he has ceremonies of working, producing, exerting (ὄργια).

But, and this is important, the two notions are never very sharply sundered, they are but two faces of the same thought, or rather will, the "will to live." Beating, at the first glance, looks like mere expulsion of evil—you "beat the mischief out of" a child[1]. But certain ritual prescriptions show another face. In Lithuania[2] the Easter Beating must be inflicted with a twig or branch of birch on which the green leaves have just sprouted. Endless care is taken to secure this. If the birch branches do not bud in time the birch rods are kept in warm water for days—if even then they do not bud they are artificially heated in a stove pipe. In Orlagau in Thuringia the custom is called "whipping with fresh green," and the spoken words tell the same tale: "Good morning! Fresh Green! Long life! You must give us a bright thaler." All is to be fresh, new, bright, living. It is the induction by contagion of new vitality and fertility. In Plutarch's ceremony, be it noted, the slave is beaten with rods of *agnus castus*, a plant much in use in ancient "medicine" as a fertility charm.

This double-edged aspect of ritual comes out rather beautifully in the bonfire festivals that survive to-day. Leaping over a bonfire, dancing round it, is still by the peasantry of modern Europe supposed to bring fertility, or as they would say "Good luck," to man and beast and crops. In Franche-Comté[3] a bonfire is lighted on the Eve of Twelfth Night and while the bonfire blazes the people dance round it crying "Good Year come back! Bread and Wine come back!" Here we have it would seem pure *im*pulsion, the bringing in of good. But behind lurks *ex*pulsion. The word "bonfire" is not, as used to be held, *bon-feu*, good fire, *feu de joie*; it is bane or bone fire, a fire for burning up old bones and rubbish of every kind. Purification and the rubbish-heap first, and only later, because of the splendid blaze, a glow like the life-giving sun, jollification, fertility, impulsion. Humanity, thank God! seems

[1] See J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena*, p. 100 ff.

[2] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Part VI, "The Scapegoat," p. 271.

[3] "Scapegoat," p. 316; and for fertilizing action of bonfires see *Balder the Beautiful*, I. 188, 336.

never satisfied to rest in negation. Out of riddance springs inevitably and almost instantly magical induction; out of destruction, construction; out of purification and abstinence, sanctification. The history of man's religious development from superstitious fear to faith and hope and charity is largely the history of the shift from *bone fire* to *bon-feu*.

Aristotle[1] with his inspired amazing insight saw and said that poetry had two forms: *praise* which issued in hymns and heroic poetry (ἐγκώμια), *blame* which yielded iambic satire (ψόγους). Aristotle could not and did not know that these two modes arose out of two ritual forms. The ritual of expulsion, riddance, cursing and finally purification issues in the literature of blame, the ritual of induction, of blessing, of magical fertilization in the literature of praise. It is all summed up in the old ritual formula: "Out with Famine, in with Health and Wealth." We analyse and distinguish, but at bottom is the one double-edged impulse, the impulse towards life.

The twofold aspect of ritual, negative and positive, for *ex*pulsion and *im*pulsion, is very clearly seen in two ritual implements in use among the Greeks, the Gorgoneion and the Liknon or Winnowing Fan.

The Gorgoneion[2] is the head of a Gorgon, but the head was there before the beast. This Gorgoneion is in fact nothing but a ritual mask, a grinning face with glaring eyes, protruding beast-like tusks and pendent tongue. The Greek used the Gorgoneion for what he called "prophylactic" purposes, that is to scare away all evil things, his enemies in the flesh and his ghostly foes. He placed it over his house, hung it over his oven and wore it on his shield, doubtless—though here for the Greeks precise evidence fails us—he danced with it as a mask in his ritual dances. Most anthropological museums contain specimens of Gorgoneion-like masks used by savages for ritual dances; such masks have the characteristic tusks and protruding pendent tongue. The protruding tongue is but the gesture of the street-boy of to-day by which he marks contempt and disgust. The origin is not so much

[1] *Poet.* IV. 7.

[2] Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, *s.v.* "Gorgoneion."

the idea of showing disgust as of ejecting a hurtful substance from the mouth. If we give it its Greek name it is *apoptuic* rather than *apotropaic*, its gist is to get rid of rather than to avert. The Gorgon with its upstanding hair is a constant monument of the religion of Fear, it is Terror incarnate.

Very different in its functions was the *liknon*[1] or winnowing-fan. Yet in origin it was closely analogous. The word in Greek for the winnowing-fan is πτύον, i.e. the spitter, that which throws up, disgorges, rejects the chaff and keeps the grain. The *liknon* became to the Greeks the great symbol and vehicle of purification physical and spiritual. But unlike the Gorgoneion it was wholly alien to the emotions of aversion and fear. It purified in order to promote growth and fertility. Its association with grain made this symbolism easy and natural. Its shape—it was a shoe-shaped basket—helped. The shoe-shaped basket was used not only for actual winnowing but, shovel-like, for the carrying of both grain and fruits. It was a purifier because it was a winnower; it was a fertility charm because it was a basket for first-fruits. Hence we find it used as a cradle for the new-born child, we find it held over the head of the initiate at the Eleusinian mysteries, we find it carried in marriage processions. At Athenian weddings a boy, both of whose parents were alive, carried a *liknon* full of loaves and pronounced the words: "Bad have I fled, better have I found"[2]. In fact as an old lexicographer[3] tells us the *liknon* is serviceable for every rite of initiation and every sacrifice. It must needs be so, for it embodies as the marriage formulary shows the essence of all ritual expulsion and impulsion.

It is probable that at this point an objection may arise in the mind of the reader. The ceremony at Chaeronea is, he will say, a curious old rite or custom, interesting in its way but not religious in the sense in which we use the word now. The objection is partly valid. In the sense in which we use the word now the rite of Chaeronea is not religious, that is to say it is not worship addressed to a god, it is not worship conducted by a priest, it is not worship held in a church. The object of this discussion is to

[1] J. E. Harrison, "Mystica Vannus Iacchi," in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XXIII. (1903) 292–324, and XXIV. (1904) 241–254, resumed in Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, *s.v.* "Fan."

[2] Ps. Plut. *Prov. Alec.* XVI.

[3] Harpocration, *s.v.* "λίκνον."

show the constantly shifting nature of the notion of religion which, being, if my contention be right, a function of our human nature, grows and shifts with human growth. But, and this is important, Plutarch an educated Greek regarded the Chaeronea rite as religious. He calls it a *sacrifice* (*θυσία*), a sacred act, a word that came in late Greek to cover any and every religious doing. Now Plutarch was not only a highly educated but a deeply religious man. A great deal of his strenuous life was devoted to the study and elucidation of religious thought and practice, his greatest woman friend Clea was a priestess of Isis and all his life long he remained profoundly pious. What Plutarch called a "sacrifice" was we may be sure in his eyes religious.

The Chaeronea rite then was to Plutarch religious, yet it contained and implied no god. The kindred rite at Athens, the expulsion of the *pharmakoi* or scapegoats, became "associated with" the worship of Apollo, but Apollo is no integral part of it. Pretty well all over the world we find rites of expulsion and impulsion, but they involve no divinity. We must face at the outset the fact that religion does not presuppose a god. This, even if we confine ourselves to modern times, is plain enough. Buddhism claims perhaps more worshippers than any other religion, more than Mahomedanism, more than Judaism, more than Christianity. No one denies to Buddhism the name of religion, yet Buddhism is godless, pure atheism. It is at once its strength and for popular purposes its weakness.

That the Chaeronea rite is as godless as priestless is clear enough. The civil officer, the Archon, expels the slave and pronounces the expulsion of Famine and the incoming of Health and Wealth; that is all. The action is what we call "magical," it is the attempt directly to control natural facts and forces without appeal to any supposed divine being for his intervention. Plutarch, intimately acquainted with the worship of the gods, surrounded by the imposing figures of the Olympians, yet does not hesitate to call a magical ceremony religious, and we hold him to be right.

Is there then no distinction between religion and magic? There is, and it is a distinction very simple but all important; religion is social, magic is or may be individual, religion is of the group however small, magic of the single unit. The methods of all very

early religions are necessarily magical, i.e. godless, but they are consecrated, made religious by their being practised for the common weal. The essence of magic is the *opus operatum*, the act effective in itself. Baptism and the consecration of the elements in the Eucharist are rites primarily magical, though much contaminated by theological sanction; they are religious because they are social, practised openly for the common weal. By this definition the Chaeronea rite is seen to be magical and hence atheistic, but though atheistic it is deeply religious. The Archon practises it at the Common Hearth for the whole township; the householder at home for his family. In both cases we are concerned with a group and a group function—the action is social.

The discovery of its social origin[1] is perhaps the greatest advance yet made in the scientific study of religion. The notion of social origin upsets so many modern individualistic convictions and prejudices that it is sure to meet with some hostility. The discovery has been a long slow process and was only made possible by recent scientific examination of religious phenomena among primitive peoples. The new and unexpected facts disclosed by this examination—facts which have bit by bit revolutionized our whole outlook—may conveniently be grouped under four heads:

(1) Totem, Tabu and Exogamy.
(2) Initiation Ceremonies.
(3) The Medicine-Man and King-God.
(4) The Fertility-Play or Year-Drama.

By a brief examination of these groups of facts it will become clear (1) that religion is a social factor and can only properly be studied in relation to social structure; (2) that the idea of a god is a bye-product arising out of rites and sanctities, a bye-product of high importance but non-essential; (3) that the function of religion is to conserve the common life physical and spiritual, this function being sometimes aided sometimes hindered by the idea of a god.

[1] The discovery was first formulated by the genius of Emil Durkheim in his brief paper, "De la définition des phénomènes religieux," in the *Année Sociologique* of 1898. His theory has been since expanded in his *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, English edition, by J. W. Swain.

(1) Totem, Tabu and Exogamy.

The word *totem*[1] means not plant or animal but simply family, group or tribe. It is important to grasp this clearly as the supposed kinship of man with various plants and animals is a fact so odd that it has arrested undue attention and tended to obscure the real significance of the totem. Besides the idea of family or group the word totem is also used for a family mark. Thus the primal notion of a totem is a group distinguished by a common label or badge. The totem animal is always a group of animals not an individual animal, the totem relation is always the relation of a group of men to a group of animals or plants, the primary gist of totemism is the *distinction of groups*.

How this distinction of groups came to be of such intense religious significance we shall see in a moment. For the present it is interesting to note that as the totem animal—the tribal animal—long precedes the animal god, so in Greek religion Moira-*partition*[2] preceded and overruled the whole Olympian system.

Totemism is then mainly and primarily an affirmation of group unity. Primitive man thinks or rather feels in terms of his group: the group is his universe. So much perhaps our latter-day parochialism or patriotism might teach us. Totems are not worshipped, they are not definite deities propitiated with prayer and sacrifice, but it is easy to see that from the focus of attention on the totem animal or plant they may be the stuff of which pagan divinity is made. The "making of a god" is a stage at which we have not yet arrived. It is enough to note for the present that the totem is the collective symbol, the badge of distinction, the representa-

[1] For the whole subject of Totemism see Dr Frazer's *Totemism*, 1887, and his *Totemism and Exogamy*, 4 vols., 1910; E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*; S. Freud, *Totem und Tabu*, 1913. Dr Frazer holds that exogamy arose independently of totemism and that totemism is the earlier of the two; he gives up the hope of discovering the origin of exogamy and believes he has caught the secret of totemism. Dr Durkheim holds that totemism and exogamy are inextricably intertwined: that the one cannot exist save as an unmeaning survival without the other. He stresses here as elsewhere the group aspect. Dr Freud adopts mainly the same position as Dr Durkheim, stressing and more fully explaining the *tabu* element. The view here expressed is based on Durkheim and Freud.

[2] For *Moira* in relation to social organization see F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy*.

tion of a family or group unity as distinct from other unities, a totem marks out, separates, differentiates. That such a badge or mark may become an intense emotional focus is self-evident; we have only to think of the passionate devotion inspired to-day by the colours. Once chosen and set up, such a badge is an emotional focus but we are left with the further question, where was the need of such a badge, the vital necessity of distinction, separation. Primitive man has no *natural* need for social order, for division and classification; what made him invent a totem and elaborate its attendant irksome system of tabus? The need must have been intense, imperative, essential to the conservation of life. To find this need we must go back to the beginning of society.

Human society with all its civilization is based on the family, the "promiscuous herd" as starting point is a theorist's dream. This primal family consisted of an adult male, one or more females and their children. This same primal family is observable even among the higher quadrupeds. With gorillas one adult male only is observable in each band. So long as the children are young all is well, and if all the children were females no difficulty would arise. The father simply marries his daughters as he married their mother. There is no "natural" instinct of repulsion against incest. Primitive man has no hygienic conscience for the next generation. Indeed, be the stock healthy, no need for such conscience exists. It is when the young male offspring grow up to maturity that trouble begins. The single oldest or strongest dominant male is confronted by his own sons as rivals[1]. He may not, probably does not, know them to be his sons, knowledge of the fact of fatherhood is comparatively late, but they are young males, inevitable rivals. If he is to keep his wives to himself he must kill these rivals or expel them. His rule is—no other male to touch the females of his camp, the result—expulsion of adolescent sons, i.e. exogamy.

It seems an *impasse*. Perpetual reiterated expulsion of all the young forces of the family. In time it is true the young males may and do conquer, the old father grows old and weak, the sons band together and slay him, but it is only themselves to retell

[1] Andrew Lang, "The Family," in *Custom and Myth*, 1884, p. 245. Darwin, *Descent of Man*, II. 362.

the old hideous story of sexual jealousy. Advance in civilization is forbidden for cooperation is impossible.

But there were other forces at work. The mother counted for something, the young males were to her not merely as to their father, young males, they were sons. The higher quadrupeds have longer infancy and this would foster affection even in the father. The eldest son not very much younger than his father would have little chance, he would be surely killed or expelled, but the youngest born when his father's passions were ebbing might have better luck. Moreover man *is* a social animal and his brain is highly developed, he must have vaguely hungered after peace and consequent plenty, killing your sons would pall after a time. The next step, *the* crucial step, the beginning of all our morality was taken—man began to impose tabus, and thereby arrived at a sort of social contract.

Tabu is never an artificial strengthening of an instinctive repulsion, it cuts clean across individual desire. It is easy to see what was the nature of the first tabu. It was made in the interests of the Father. Weary at last of the expulsion and slaying of sons, conscious that the day would come when they would in turn slay or disable him, he made terms with them on the basis of a tabu. You may stay at home on condition that you do not touch my wives or at least certain of my wives, your mother and your sisters or some of them are to you tabu. And if tabu they must be marked as such, they must carry on their bodies a totem badge or mark of avoidance. This system of distinction once started branched out of course into endless complexities with which we are not concerned. The primal cardinal fact is that totemism consists in group distinction, that it functions through tabu and that it takes its rise in perhaps the strongest or at least the fiercest of human impulses,—in sex jealousy. Here, as so often elsewhere, the fabric of Church and State[1] rests on a basis of savage animal impulse, crossed by the dawnings of a social impulse.

The tabus of the primal family have left their traces in the curious survivals among savages known as Avoidance[2]. It seems

[1] See J. G. Frazer, *Psyche's Task*, passim.

[2] See J. J. Atkinson, *Primal Law*, 1903. The theory of the origin of exogamy in the jealousy of the Sire is due to Mr Atkinson, but he does not connect this with totemism.

odd and inexplicable to us that a brother may not speak to or even see his sister. The arrangement is, among the houseless nomads of Australia, inconvenient and to our thinking absolutely senseless. But in the light of the primal tabu on all sisters it is clear enough. The sister if she catch sight of her brother by accident in the bush is well advised to fall flat on her face.

Moreover, and this is an interesting point, we find the echo of the old savage primal family in Greek mythology. Before Zeus reigned there was an older dynasty—that of Kronos, and before Kronos was Ouranos the Heaven, mated to Gaia the Earth. Ouranos hated his children and slew them, but Kronos the *youngest* son conspired against his father and emasculated him and reigned in his stead. The story repeats itself in varying form from generation to generation. Kronos in his turn devours his own children as fast as they are born, knowing that he was fated to be deprived of his kingdom by one of them. Rhea the mother devised a plan by which she might save her *youngest born* Zeus, who reigned thereafter in his father's stead. In these stories it is the kingship that is emphasized, but it is clear that behind lies the jealousy of the Sire.

This explanation of the totem as essentially a group badge adopted to mark exclusions and facilitate tabus made necessary by the Sire's jealousy clears up much that has long been mysterious. The totem animal once chosen may as a rule not be killed and eaten, but on certain solemn occasions by common consent he is killed and he is eaten. From that solemn slaying is traceable all the long series of sacrifices and sacraments. Just so the father—for whom indeed the totem animal is in a sense surrogate—cannot and may not be slain. But in the old family system, as we have seen, by common consent and insurrection of the brothers he was slain. This slaying, at first an inevitable outrage, may well have crystallized into a custom. Whether the old Sire was ever eaten by way of incorporating his exceptional powers may remain uncertain. But in the slaying of the father we have at least the germ of the later sacrifice of the king-god.

Further, light is thrown by this explanation on the curious attitude of mind towards the totem, which Freud[1] has called *Ambivalenz*, the attitude that is of mingled attraction and repul-

[1] *Op. cit.*, the term was originated by Bleuler.

sion, desire and shrinking, which is the very gist and marrow of tabu. This *Ambivalenz* is characteristic of the feeling of the son to the father, and of all savages towards tabued objects. It is the attitude of obedience to a non-natural prohibition, the desire remaining while the prohibition holds. It disappears when the rationality of a prohibition is fully recognized, but it survives in diseased neurotic consciences charged with the atmosphere of repressed desire. Tabu is the first categorical imperative and is the parent of sanctity, that sanctity which long preceded divinity. Holiness has just this character of *Ambivalenz*; the thing that is *sacer* as Robertson Smith long ago recognized is impure as well as pure, a danger as well as a safeguard, it attracts and repels. Now-a-days we think of things holy as things divine, either gods themselves or things especially associated with divinity, but sanctity to primitive man meant something quite other, it meant the thing tabued, whether person or plant or animal, the tabu being imposed by the group protecting itself against the individual. Sin, sanctity, repentance, purification, all the notions we feel to be so intensely and characteristically religious took their rise at least in tabu.

Especially does this conjoint notion of tabu and totemism explain the sanctity of animals and plants and the rise of plant and animal gods. On any other showing it is not easy to understand why a man should worship the plant or animal which he can any time kill and eat. He might admire it, and feel curiosity as to its wondrous ways, he might if it were fierce and strong feel fear of it, but he would not feel that special blend of awe and attraction which we call worship. But given that an animal or plant has been chosen as a totem, all becomes simple. It may have been quite accidentally that the thing chosen was plant or animal. The choice was natural as man's attention is much engaged by plants and animals but it was not essential, as is shown by the fact that almost any natural object may become a totem, and even some objects that are artificial. Given then that an animal or plant is chosen as a totem, it becomes the sign manual of tabu, it is hedged round with prohibitions, it becomes a thing apart, marked by the group with sanctity, remote from daily use. It is not the plant or animal that is useful to him or that feeds him that the savage

will tend to worship. It is the plant or animal tabued. From the tabued animal or plant to the sacred animal or plant and from the sacred to the divine the steps are easy.

Moreover plants and animals are of high, indeed the highest importance in totemistic rites. So high is this importance that it has led some observers to see in these plant and animal rites the actual origin of the sanctity of the totem. This we believe to be mistaken, sanctity arises primarily in tabu.

Turning to totemistic rites their object is clear enough. They are uniformly what we have called *impulsive* or inductive. Their object is to produce and enhance life, the multiplication of such totem plants and animals as are good for food. The ceremonies are known among some Australians as *Intichiuma*[1] and this name has become current. They are also known as *mbatgalkatiuma*, which means "to fecundate" or to "put in good condition." The Intichiuma are celebrated just before the rainy season. The rain is important because the savage has grasped the all important fact that life depends on moisture. This life-giving moisture will be sought and found in various ways according to physical conditions. In Egypt religious ceremonial will centre not on rain-making but on the Nile. In Greece we shall have rain-making ceremonies and the cult of springs and small rivers. In Australia as soon as the rains arrive, vegetation springs up as though by magic and animals multiply. It is the great religious season of the year.

The rites celebrated are mainly mimetic dances. All over the world, in the magico-religious stage, primitive man dances where we should pray or praise. This is inevitable though at first surprising. He cannot pray, he knows of no one to pray to. He must *act* directly—try to get what he wants by doing it. His dances are in the main, in so far as they are not merely the outlet of pent up emotion, *mimetic*. He does in pantomime what he wishes done. He wants to multiply his totem, so he imitates the actions of this totem—he jumps like a kangaroo, he screeches like a bat, he croaks like a frog, he imitates the birth of a Witchetty grub. Only a kangaroo man can cause kangaroos to multiply and though

[1] The best summary and analysis of the *Intichiuma* rites is found in Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, p. 326, based of course on Spencer and Gillen and Strehlow's investigations.

he may not, save in solemn sacrament, eat kangaroo himself, he performs the kangaroo ceremonies that other totem groups may eat and they will do the like for him. Rain is often imitated and caused by the sprinkling of drops of blood or the shaking of white down to simulate clouds.

And here a point of great importance must be noted. These pantomimic rites have all one object, the promotion of life by means of food, but they are separable into two groups, the one purely imitative, just described, the other imitative but also commemorative. The one looks forward, the other back[1]. The commemorative rite looks back to the ancestors of the tribe and reenacts their doings, it represents the mythical history of the tribe. The past is made to live again by means of a veritable dramatic representation. Now here the intent is manifestly not the direct impulsion of fertility but the strengthening of solidarity. So important however is the *indirect* action of this strengthening of solidarity that to omit the performance of the ancestor rites would inevitably bring bad luck. There could be no better instance of the intense religious importance of the group. No group can function with its full force unless it invokes tradition. Here in these commemorative ancestor rites we have the dawn of true religious notions of high importance, the idea of immortality, the idea of group immortality as preceding individual immortality, the idea of ancestor worship which springs straight out of ancestor commemoration and is a powerful factor in the making of the anthropomorphic god.

Totemism and tabu have given us in embryo our main religious conceptions, the ideas of sanctity, of sacrament, of sin, of sacrifice, of animal and plant worship, of immortality and ancestor worship. We have seen them emerge in close conjunction with social structure, and this no longer surprises us. If religious impulse be the impulse to the conservation and promotion of the group life, and that life depends for its conservation on some sort of social contract, the dependence of religion on social structure is inherent and

[1] For the detailed psychological analysis of rites both commemorative and anticipative, see J. E. Harrison, *Themis*, chapter II, "On the Dithyramb, the δρώμενον and the Drama," and more simply, *Ancient Art and Ritual*, chapter II, "Pantomime Dances."

essential. Rites not only procure the means of life but they are the means whereby the social group periodically reaffirms itself.

To watch the further development of these embryo notions we pass to our second head.

(2) Initiation Ceremonies.

Initiation ceremonies are but a specialized form of the fertility ceremonies described under the name Intichiuma. When the novices are initiated a series of ceremonies are performed before them which reproduce even in minute particulars the rites of the Intichiuma. The mechanism of the rites is often identical, but the initiation rites are marked off by two peculiarities which it is all important to note. These are (1) the initiation rite is into the tribe, it is of far wider import than the totem ceremony; (2) the initiation rite is concerned with the human element in the tribe, it has not for its direct object the fertilization of either animal or plant. Its object is, as the savage himself frequently says, "to make or manufacture a man."

The detailed ceremonies of initiation are variable and cannot be discussed here[1]. We can only emphasize the main gist of the rite and this has been well summed up in the formulary *rite de passage*, rite of transition from one stage to another. It has been ably observed[2] that all ceremonies concerned directly with the welfare of man have this transition character, ceremonies of birth, of puberty, of marriage and of death are all alike in mechanism, they all facilitate the passage from one state to another, they are all of expulsion and impulsion, they ward off the dangers of the transit and enhance its benefits. The *rite de passage* on which primitive man focussed his attention was emphatically the rite of puberty or maturity, his transit from childhood when he was a useless encumbrance to manhood when he took upon himself the two main duties of savage maturity, he became a warrior and a father, he defended the present generation and engendered the next.

[1] A collection convenient for the general reader will be found in Hutton Webster, *Secret Societies*, 1908, and see the article "Initiation," by Goblet d'Alviella in Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, and H. Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbunde*, 1902.

[2] Van Gennep, *Rites de passage*, 1909.

The attention of explorers was at first drawn to initiation rites, mainly because of the horrible sufferings endured by the novices. These sufferings were in part tests of endurance such as are imposed now-a-days by boys when they initiate a new schoolfellow. More important and indeed cardinal is the fact that in initiation ceremonies the death of the novice is almost always simulated and sometimes actually caused. This death is followed by a resurrection. All the various mummeries of death and resurrection[1], often bloody and disgusting enough, simulate and therefore to the savage mind stimulate the passage from the old life to the new. But the simulated death has another aim, distinctly social, that is to emphasize the solidarity of the tribe, only by his simulated death can the boy be brought into contact and made one with his ancestors. They it is who instruct him in the tribal secrets, the old men of the tribe who initiate him are often positively disguised as ancestors. Thus we see in Initiation as in the Intichiuma the two elements, commemoration of ancestors as well as magical mimesis.

Initiation, it will be remembered, is of the tribe not of the totem. In initiation the youth is brought into relation with a larger unit, and this larger unit is figured to him by a Great Spirit[2], a very near approach to what we call a god. If the totem replaces the old Sire so this Great Spirit replaces for the time his peculiar totem and is figured as the father of all the members of different totems who constitute the tribe. Thus among the Euahlayi the Great Spirit is called Baiame and in this tribe it is related that the various totems were only the names given to the different parts of Baiame's body and this is but a simple figurative way of saying that the Great Spirit is the synthesis of all the totems and consequently a sort of presentation of the idea or rather sentiment of tribal unity. These Great Spirits found among so many primitive peoples were, it was at first thought, mere borrowings from Christianity taken over from missionaries. But the fact that the Great Spirit is found uniformly not in totem rites but in tribal initiations shows clearly that the Great Spirit is the outcome and expression of a special social structure. He had his origin in those rites which it was his function to represent.

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, XI. 225, "The Ritual of Death and Resurrection."
[2] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, p. 294 ff.

Initiation was to the savage *the* rite of paramount importance. Other *rites de passage* were performed at the other crises of a man's life but they all paled before the maturity rite. Birth was scarcely accounted an event for religious sanction, marriage followed as a corollary from initiation and death itself was a *rite de passage*, when the dead man passed over to join the dead members of his tribe in another world[1]. Moreover death itself is not a crisis so clearly marked as with us, a man dies socially when he ceases to be able to dance his tribal dances. The notion of death as an initiation has left manifest traces in Greek religion. That to die is to be initiated into the "Higher Mysteries" was to the Greek a literal fact. This initiation was consummated by a Sacred Marriage with the Earth Mother. Hence it is not surprising that as Artemidorus[2] observes: "if sick men dream of marriage it is a foreboding of death," for "all the accompaniments of marriage are exactly the same as those of death," and again, "marriage and death have universally been held by mankind to be 'fulfilments' (τέλη)." The Greek word for *initiation* (τελετή) tells its own tale, it means not entering in, but completion, accomplishment, fulfilment, its cognate (τέλειος) means "grown up." The great Eleusinian mysteries were primarily the rite of man's maturity side by side with rites to promote the maturity of earth's fruits[3].

Birth, puberty, marriage, death were to the savage and in large measure to the whole ancient world all crises of life to be attended by rites of initiation, *rites de passage*. He did not formulate their similarity but he felt it and expressed it by the similarity of rites; all were the occasion of rites of expulsion, to free life from evil, and even more of impulsion, to promote life's welfare. But before we pass to the next point we must emphasize the peculiar social structure out of which initiation rites sprang. We have left behind us the old family group with the dominant sire and even the totem group which succeeded it is less prominent. We have advanced to the tribe. The important social feature in tribal initiation is the band of young men confronted by the band of elder men, as initiators. We have an oligarchy rather than an

[1] R. Hertz, "La Représentation Collective de la Mort," in *Année Sociologique*, x. (1905–06) 88.

[2] *Oneirocr.* II. 49 and 65; for the whole subject of the analogy of death and marriage rites, see J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folk Lore*, 1910, p. 590.

[3] Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, "Initiation" (Greek).

autocracy. Moreover, whereas totem-rites focus on nutrition, initiation rites focus on sex.

It was long a puzzle in Greek religion why Dionysos should always be attended by a *thiasos*, a band of dancing revellers. Zeus and the other Olympian divinities had no such attendants. The question was only made more complex yet more pressing by the discovery that this band of revellers of young men dancing was closely paralleled in other cults. Greece had not only Satyrs, it had also Kouretes, Korybantes, Titanes, Seilenoi, Bacchoi, Rome had its dancing priests, its Salii, far-off India had its dancing Maruts, half daimon half man[1]. The riddle was read for Greece by the discovery in Crete of the Hymn to the Kouretes[2], a ritual hymn containing very early material; it is sung by a band of armed dancers and they invoke their leader, the Greatest Kouros, to come for the year and to leap for fields of fruit and for fleecy flocks and *for young citizens*. The Kouretes are the young men just come to maturity, just initiated into the fertility dance of their tribe; they invoke their leader as lord of moisture and life, or as they say, "Lord of all that is wet and gleaming." The band of initiate youths are the prototypes of all the Satyrs and Seilenoi, the Salii and Maruts of Europe and Asia, they too are the parents of the still surviving mummers and sword-dancers of village feasts[3].

The cult of the Kouretes was at home in Crete and the great central worship of the Mother goddess. In the bridal chamber (*θαλάμευμα*) of Crete the young men, before they might win their earthly brides, were initiated to the Mountain Mother[4] and became symbolically her consorts or husbands. Marriage is *the* mystery *par excellence*. The ceremony was of prime importance as securing alike her fertility and theirs. Thus it will be seen that the Kouretes reflect a matrilinear social structure, the condition that naturally arises when parentage is precarious and often untraceable. Such a social structure focuses its attention on Mother and Child rather than on Father. The Child grows up into the young initiated man

[1] Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, "Kouretes and Korybantes"; Leopold v. Schroeder, *Mysterium und Mimus im Rig-Veda*, 1908.

[2] J. E. Harrison, *Themis*, pp. 1–49.

[3] E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, pp. 182–204.

[4] A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, 1913, p. 650; Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, "Mountain Mother."

and the young initiated man becomes the consort of the perennial mother. The Kouretes in the Hymn tend the holy child and this is with magical intent, they marry that the land may be fertile, they tend the child that their own children may be nurtured. Then as the religious instinct develops they project from their own body a leader, a Greatest Kouros, to whom they hand over the functions they themselves performed. But this process will become more clear at a later stage in the argument. In like fashion the religious rites of the Satyrs centre round the Mother Semele, the Phrygo-Thracian Earth goddess, and in like fashion the Satyrs project from their band the arch-satyr Dionysos; the *thiasos* is before the god.

So far we have seen that the social factor which shaped and conditioned religious notions was the *group*, first the totem-group then the tribal-group. We have now to watch the emergence and development of the *individual* as social factor and to mark its influence on ritual and religious thinking. This brings us to our third stage.

(3) The Medicine-Man and King-God.

The old Byzantine scholar Tzetzes has bequeathed to a tardily thankful posterity this remarkable statement:

> *Zeuses* the ancients used to call their kings.

He feels it to be noteworthy for, in slightly altered words, he repeats it six several times. Yet for eight centuries it lay, a neglected fossil. Scholars of course were conscious of a doctrine known as the "divine right of kings." They remembered that Dr Johnson was taken to Queen Anne, was touched by Queen Anne for scrofula. Virgil they knew tells how the mad and blasphemous Salmoneus King of Thessaly was blasted because he dared to counterfeit the thunder and lightning. But it occurred to no one[1] that Salmoneus *qua* king was doing his regular business, that in the eyes of his people he *was* Zeus and *had* to make the weather.

What then is this divinity that "doth hedge a king"? How could the notion arise when kings are born and die and sleep and wake and eat and drink like the rest of us? The answer is found

[1] Attention was, I believe, first called to the passage in Tzetzes and the true explanation given by Mr A. B. Cook, *Classical Review*, 1903–1904.

in the origin of the kingship. How did kings come to be? The answer may seem obvious. The king is the strongest man of the tribe. This simple solution like so many obvious answers is wrong or at least not wholly right. It is the answer of what Dr Frazer[1] calls the "armchair philosopher with his feet on the fender," and not of the man who seeks his facts among the savages of to-day in Uganda, in Malay, in Central Australia, in Japan. Here and there a strong man by sheer physical force may enjoy a certain dominance, but mere strength will not suffice for a king, the savage is ruled rather by hope and fear than force, the king must have magic behind him. The personality of king and god alike develop out of the head medicine-man, and the business of the head medicine-man as we have seen is to be food-producer and rain-maker. The king then is the head medicine-man and, delightful corollary, his fetishes are the regalia, the possession of which, as for example among the Southern Celebes, *carries with it the right to the throne.* These regalia may be almost anything, a weapon, a bit of stone or wood, or queer shaped fruit, best of all *a bit of the body of a former king* like the relic of a saint.

In the Australian ceremonies of the Intichiuma, it will be remembered, the ancestors of the tribe were commemorated in pantomime. When the magical functions of the tribe are focused on one individual, the king, the ancestors are not forgotten. Among the Matabeles of South Africa[2] the king each year offers sacrifices at the festival of the new fruits which ends the annual tribal dances. On these occasions "*he prays to the spirits of his forefathers and to his own spirit.*" There is, it will be noted, no god involved, only the forefathers and himself the head medicine-man. In Southern Nigeria[3] one of the petty kings gave this account of himself and certainly he does not figure as "the strong man." "The whole town forced me to be head chief. They hanged the big juju (or fetish of the buffalo's horns) round my neck.....It is an old custom that the head-chief here shall never leave his compound. I have been shut up ten years, but being an old man I don't miss my freedom. I am the oldest man of the town and they

[1] My instances are all taken from Dr Frazer's *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, 1905.

[2] Frazer, *op. cit.* p. 32.

[3] *Op. cit.* p. 118.

keep me here to look after the jujus and to conduct the rites celebrated when women are about to give birth to children, and other ceremonies of the same kind. By the observance and performance of these ceremonies I bring game to the hunter, cause the young crop to be good, bring fish to the fisherman, and make rain to fall. So they bring me meat, yams, fish. To make rain, I drink water and squirt it out and pray to our big deities. If I were to go outside this compound I should fall down dead on returning to the hut. My wives cut my hair and nails and take great care of the parings." Here the mention of the "big deities" shows the dawn of the priestly go-between, but otherwise we have just an old medicine-man, a centre of tribal sanctities.

These puppet kings though intensely divine are really rather the slaves and tools of their people than their lords. This is shown not only by their tedious trammelled lives hedged round by tabus but in poignant fashion by their tragic deaths[1]. In his life he must be what the Greeks called *ἀμύμων*, "blameless," that is flawless in his physical life, because on his integrity and vitality depended the life of his people and of all those natural things on which that people's life depended. Fertility, flocks and herds, rain and sunshine depended on the king's life, if that life waned pestilence and famine would certainly ensue. So by inexorable savage logic, the king must never be allowed to grow enfeebled, he must, if needs be, be put to death to save his life, Sometimes the king himself is put to death by common consent of the tribe like the ancient Sire, sometimes by proxy it is the king's son, sometimes a sacred beast in whom the king is incarnate—survival of the totem, sometimes a chance stranger regarded as a kind of divine apparition, sometimes merely a representative puppet. In some form or another "it is expedient that one man shall die for the people" and to be efficacious that man must be sacred, divine. Hence all the manifold rites of death and burial of the gods which puzzled the pious Plutarch[2] so sadly. Rites of "tearing to pieces," "resurrections," "regenerations," of "deaths and dismemberments," rites which he knew took place not only in Egypt or Asia Minor but in connection with his own god Dionysos. Plutarch would fain

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, III. "The Dying God."
[2] *De Iside et Osiride*, 69–71.

think of his gods as Olympians, serene, beneficent, immortal, but being an honest man he cannot blink facts. He is like some kindly Anglican called upon suddenly on Ash Wednesday to curse his neighbours instead of blessing them.

The sanctity of the king-god's life, the supreme importance of conserving it, survives in the ritual of the Roman Church to-day, in the custom of burning Incense. Ask a Roman priest, or indeed any educated person, what is the significance of Incense[1]. He will tell you it is part of the regular ritual of the Mass, that it is a symbol of purification, of consecration—that Incense mounts like prayer to heaven and, what not. All this Incense has come to mean, but the use of Incense dates from the time of the Pharaohs, and to the priest of Pharaoh's time Incense spelt something simpler and more substantial. The Egyptian wanted to keep his king alive. The king had been his benefactor during life, why lose his benefactions by death? To keep the king alive the Egyptian mummified the corpse, and also made portrait statues of exact and marvellous similitude. But something was wanting. The statue lacked the moisture, the juices of life, the aroma, the smell of the living man—a smell of which the Egyptian with his liberal use of unguents and perfumes was vividly conscious. To supply the deficiency of moisture he poured out libations, to give the aroma he burnt Incense and his custom spread well nigh over the whole civilized world.

It may seem at first sight to be of little consequence whether magical functions were distributed among a group of initiated men or focused in the "person of a single king." Possibly even the transition might seem a loss. For the dominance of a democratic body of full grown men we substitute a single autocrat. History has however shown everywhere that real freedom begins with the emergence of the gifted individual, the democracy of the whole tribe is but a democracy in name, it is really the tyranny of a gerontocracy, of the old men who initiate the young men and forcibly impose the tradition of the tribe. With the medicine-king arose a certain though very limited scope for the forces of personality and also, as the medicine-man was the depository of such experimental science as the tribe possessed, his elevation to the

[1] G. Elliot Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon.* Manchester University Press.

kingship was in some sense the first beginning of "endowment" of research.

But for religion the momentous step taken by the institution of the kingship was that henceforward sanctities tended to become personalities. The notions of tabu and sanctity became incarnate in a person—the king as incarnate tabu and magic is undoubtedly the father of the pagan god. We shall later see that our modern notion of divinity, though owing much of its anthropomorphism to pagan gods, has also other roots. This notion that the sacred, the divine, was human-shaped is perhaps the most momentous step, for better for worse, that the religious imagination has ever taken. How such a step came to be taken, that is how the god developed out of the human king, will be best seen when we examine our last stage or stratum, the Fertility Play or Year Drama.

(4) The Fertility Play or Year Drama.

At Viza, the ancient Bizue in Thrace, some eight hours to the North of Salmydessus on the Black Sea, may still be seen[1] a folk-play which by its very simplicity and even baldness makes singularly clear its original magical intent. The masqueraders assemble early in the morning. They are two men wearing masks, goat-skin caps and bells, one of them sometimes differentiated by a blackened face, two boys disguised as girls, an old woman carrying a baby in a basket and a sort of chorus of gipsies and gendarmes. The masqueraders after the fashion of mummers in England and elsewhere go from house to house demanding food and money and singing songs of blessing on the generous householders. One of them carries a phallos with which he knocks at the doors. All the characters dance together, some brandishing drawn swords, and an obscene pantomime is acted on straw heaps in front of the house by two men, one disguised as a woman. Then follows a sort of preliminary act, the mock forging of a ploughshare by the "smith" and his wife, the yoking of the plough which is drawn round the village square and the sowing of seed.

Next comes the play proper. The old woman Babo comes in

[1] It was seen by Mr R. M. Dawkins in 1906; see "The Modern Carnival in Thrace and the Cult of Dionysos," *J.H.S.* xxvi. (1906) 191, and A. J. B. Wace, "North Greek Festivals," *B.S.A.* xvi. (1909–1910) 232.

with the baby in the *likno* or cradle-basket. She declares that "the baby is getting too big for the basket." The child has a huge appetite, demands food and drink and finally calls for a wife. One of the girls is then pursued by one of the men and brought to the child, now grown to maturity, as bride. At this point comes a notable interruption; before the wedding can take place, the second man comes in as antagonist to hinder the wedding. A fight ensues and ultimately the antagonist is shot down by the original bridegroom. The slayer traces a line round the supposed slain indicating a grave. He then pretends to flay the dead man. Meantime the other bride raises a loud lament and throws herself over the prostrate body. In the lament the slayer and the rest of the actors join. Then follows the parody of a Christian funeral. Suddenly the dead man comes to life, gets up and the play proper ends.

The play proper is followed by a plough ceremony similar to the plough prelude. This time the two brides are yoked to the plough and drag it twice round the village square. While the plough is being dragged chorus and spectators cry aloud: *May wheat be ten piastres the bushel! Rye, five piastres the basket! Barley, three piastres the bushel! Amen, O God, that the poor may eat! Yea, O God, that poor folk be filled!*

The intent of the whole ritual could not be clearer, it is a fertility drama "that the poor may eat." The central notion is the same as that of the rite at Chaeronea, "Out with Hunger, in with Health and Wealth," only the primary notion has become amplified and humanized, it has become a cycle of the life of man and the life of the year.

In that cycle two events are cardinal. The Fight (*agon*) and the Death swiftly followed by the Resurrection. The Fight in variant forms is world-wide and the Fight of Summer and Winter variously disguised, the Fight of the Old Year and the New, of Darkness and Light, the Fight of the Old King with the Young, of the Father with the Son, of the Hero with the Monster. The great Agon dwindles down into a Tug of War widely practised as a magical Fertility Rite.

The Death and Resurrection have the like magical intent, and here the essential rite is the Resurrection, the Death is but the necessary preliminary. Sometimes as in the rites of Tammuz and

Adonis[1] the lamentations over the death develop so portentously that they tend to obscure the rite of resurrection, but the rite is always there, witness the ritual hymn to Adonis; after the long lamentation comes:

> Where grass was not, there grass is eaten,
> Where water was not, water is drunk,
> Where cattle sheds are not, cattle sheds are built.

For those who see in these Year-Daimons or Vegetation Spirits only actual men, definite heroes who died and were buried in particular tombs, these resurrection rites present a serious difficulty; the actual historical hero does die and is buried, he does not rise again. If the rites of the folk-drama are purely commemorative then why introduce a resurrection ceremony? If these rites are, as we believe them to be[2], the utterance of man's ardent desire and the commemoration with magical intent of nature's annual doings, all is clear. The annual course of nature knows an annual resurrection and on its happening all man's life and prosperity depend.

Of recent years research over the most widespread areas has brought to light in very singular and convincing fashion the tenacity and vitality of the Folk-Play or Fertility Drama[3]. It survives not only in children's games and peasant festivals but in the forms or moulds that it has lent to literature. Among the Rig-Veda hymns for example it has been shown[4] that certain dialogue poems go back undoubtedly to a primitive form of ritual drama, the intent here, as elsewhere, being purely magical, the stimulation of powers of fertility in man and cattle, or the letting loose for the like purpose of the powers of rain and moisture of springs and rivers. Behind the literary hymn form lie the fertility dances of the armed daimons, the Salii, the Maruts of ancient India.

More familiar and perhaps to us more convincing is the fact that Greek Tragedy owes to this Fertility Drama not indeed its material but the form in which that material is cast. After a detailed examination of the plays and fragments Professor

[1] Langdon, *Tammuz and Ishtar*, p. 23.

[2] We do not for a moment deny that the rites often and indeed usually crystallize about an historical kernel as e.g. in the Christian religion

[3] For the whole subject see E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, for May Games, Sword Dances and Mummers' Play, vol. I. pp. 160–227. Clarendon Press, 1903.

[4] Leopold von Schroeder, *Mysterium und Mimus im Rig-Veda*. Leipzig, 1908.

Murray[1] has come to the conclusion—and few now gainsay him—that while the contents of the plots come from the heroic saga the ritual forms in which that content is cast derive straight from the *dromena* the doings of the Year-Daimon. Such forms are the Prologue, the Agon, the Pathos, the Messenger's Speech, the Threnos or Lamentation, the Anagnorisis or Recognition and the final Theophany. Certain of these forms, notably the Agon, survive in the Sacred Games of the Greeks, but here for the most part in shadowy fashion since they are well nigh submerged by a growing athleticism. Tragedy which took its plots, its content from the heroic saga, from the lives and struggles of individual heroes, ended in death, because in this world the human individual knows no resurrection. Comedy[2] is nearer to the original folk-play and finds its consummation in a revel and a marriage.

Still more strange is it to find the ritual mould surviving even in the plays of Shakespeare[3]. The Hamlet-saga like the Orestes-saga has behind it the ancient and world-wide battle of Summer and Winter, of the Old King and the New, of Life and Death, of Fertility and Barrenness; behind the tragic fooling, as behind the Old King Oedipus is the figure of the scapegoat, the whole tragic katharsis rests on the expulsion of evil in the ritual of the spring—*Renouveau*. The examination of the elder Eddic poems[4] shows that the theory of their origin in primitive ritual drama correlates a number of facts which else appear meaningless and unrelated. Finally and perhaps most strangely of all it has recently been shown[5] that the legend of the Holy Grail has a like ritual foundation. In the Grail literature "we possess a unique example of the restatement of an ancient and august Ritual in terms of imperishable Romance."

The question of the influence of folk-plays and fertility dramas on various forms of literature has now long passed beyond the

[1] "Excursus on the Ritual Forms preserved in Greek Tragedy," in *Themis*, p. 341.

[2] F. M. Cornford, *The Origin of Attic Comedy*, 1914, and "The Origin of the Olympic Games," being chapter VII of *Themis*.

[3] *Hamlet and Orestes*. The Annual Shakespeare Lecture before the British Academy, 1914. Gilbert Murray.

[4] Bertha S. Phillpotts, *The Elder Edda and Ancient Scandinavian Drama*, p. 198. Cambridge University Press, 1920.

[5] Jessie L. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance*. Cambridge University Press, 1920.

region of conjecture. It is firmly based on fact and widely accepted. It would be a delight to follow it into further fields[1] but the task before us now is quite other. We have to note not the evolution of literature but the primitive beginnings of theology, to mark how the god rose out of the rite.

The ritual dance then is dead, but its ghost still lives on in Seville Cathedral[2] and wakes to a feeble fluttering life three times a year. At the Festival of Corpus Christi, during the Octave of the Immaculate Conception and during the three days of Carnival (when I had the good fortune to see it) the ritual dance is danced in the Holy of Holies behind the great gold grille immediately in front of the High Altar. It is danced by the so-called Seises or groups of choristers. Their number has now dwindled to two groups of five.

This dance of the Seises has been to the Church the cause of no small embarrassment and she has frequently but so far vainly sought to abolish it. She admits that its origin is "perdue dans la nuit des temps." It is frankly pagan and we can scarcely avoid the conjecture that it took its origin in the dances of the Kouretes in Crete in honour of the Mother and the Son. At Carnival, when I saw it, the dance took place after Vespers. The song with which the dance was accompanied was a prayer to the Sun, but it was to the setting, not as with the Kouretes the rising Sun. It was a prayer for light and healing. The dance is now attenuated to a single formal step. It is decorous even prim in character. But the fading light, the wondrous setting, above all, the harsh plangent Spanish voices of the boy singers are strangely moving. It is a sight once seen never forgotten. Great Pan is dead but his ghost still dances.

[1] I would here record my conviction which I hope to establish in another connection that the widespread legend, Don Juan, arose from a fertility ritual. As a similar survival may be noted the Passion play of Hasan and Husain, still annually enacted in Persia and India. Taking its rise undoubtedly in a historical fact, it is cast in the form of a ritual drama.

[2] All that is known of the history of this strange survival is set down by Don Simón de la Rosa y Lopez in his *Los Seises de la Catedral de Sevilla*, 1904. The modern music which now accompanies the dance is published in *Baile de Seises en la Catedral de Sevilla*, para piano con letra por D. Hilarion Eslava, Sevilla.

II

PRIMITIVE THEOLOGY

"God is my desire." TOLSTOI.

IN all the primitive ritual so far examined, in the rites of Totemism, of Initiation Ceremonies, the King-God and the Fertility Drama, one surprising fact stands out clean and clear; we have nothing that we in our modern sense of the words could call the worship of a god—of sanctity we have abundance, of divinity nothing. Yet all the while if we examine the matter closely there are present elements which must and did go to the making of a god. Only it is important to grasp at the outset firmly this fact, that it is possible to have a living and vigorous religion without a theology.

Man, the psychologists tell us, is essentially an image-maker[1]. He cannot perform the simplest operation without forming of it some sort of correlative idea. It has been much disputed whether the myth arises out of the rite or the rite out of the myth, whether a man thinks something because he does it or does it because he thinks it. As a matter of fact the two operations arose together and are practically inseparable. An animal first perceives, perception immediately sets up reaction, that reaction is two-fold, perception sets up action in the body, representation in the mind. A rite is not of course the same as a simple action. A rite is—it must never be forgotten—an action *re*done (commemorative) or *pre*done (anticipatory and magical). There is therefore always in a rite a certain tension either of remembrance or anticipation and this tension emphasizes the emotion and leads on to representation[2].

It is moreover, psychology tells us, mainly from delayed reactions that representation springs. In animals who act from what we call instinct action follows immediately or at least swiftly on perception, but in man where the nervous system is more complex perception is not immediately transformed into action, there

[1] For the analysis of magic and its dependence on 'free ideas' see my *Alpha and Omega*, pp. 187–195.

[2] I have elsewhere analysed the psychology of the δρώμενον or rite. See *Themis*, pp. 42–49, and my *Ancient Art and Ritual*, in the Home University Library, pp. 35–44.

is an interval for choice between several possible courses. Perception is pent up and, helped by emotion, becomes conscious representation. In this momentary halt between perception and reaction all our images, ideas, in fact our whole mental life, is built up. If we were a mass of well combined instincts, that is if the cycle of perception and action were instantly fulfilled, we should have no representation and hence no art and no theology. In fact in a word religious presentation, mythology or theology, as we like to call it, springs like ritual from arrested, unsatisfied desire[1]. We figure to ourselves what we want, we create an image and that image is our god.

A god so projected *is* part of the worshipper and is felt and realized as such; divinity has not yet separated off from humanity. The dancer in the sacred rite cannot be said to worship his god, he lives him, experiences him. The worshipper at this stage might communicate with his god, he would not offer him sacrificial gifts or prayer. The question arises, by what process did severance take place? We cannot answer with certainty, but two points suggest themselves. The process of personification led to severance and personification was undoubtedly helped by two things: (1) the existence of a leader to the band of worshippers, (2) the making of puppets and images.

Collective group-emotion is strong, but, dominant though it be, it might never be strong enough to induce personification but for a nucleus of actual fact. The band of dancers has a leader, that leader is in a sense separate and about him emotion focuses. Once elected as representative spokesman and chief-dancer, he is in a sense insulated; the rest of the band regard him with contemplation and some incipient awe, he is sacred and on the way to become separately divine. He is what the Greeks called a δαιμόνων ἀγούμενος, *leader of daimons*, and not far from being the accomplished *theos* or god. In this matter we are on safe ground for in the famous *Hymn of the Kouretes* Zeus himself as chief dancer is addressed as Greatest Kouros or Young Man, head of the initiate band[2].

[1] This remains equally true if, with the new psychological school of "Behaviourists," we regard the primitive element in desire as an impulse away from the actual rather than an attraction towards the ideal. See Bertrand Russell, *Analysis of Mind*, p. 68.

[2] See *Themis*, pp. 30–49.

The seasonal character of all these rites helped on the process of personification that led to severance. A perception that is *re*current is apt to lead on to a *con*ception. The plural generates the abstract. The recurrent May-Kings and Jack-o'-the-Greens and Deaths get a kind of permanent separate life of their own and become separate beings. In this way they help to beget a kind of daimon or spirit; from being annual they became a sort of perennial though not yet immortal god. We are apt to think and speak of the King of the May or the Death as "personifying the Spirit of Vegetation" or of Death. But primitive man does not first conceive an abstraction and then embody it. The process is the reverse. He first *per*ceives the actual leader and then helped by frequent repetitions *con*ceives a daimon of the dance.

There is another practical help to the determination and stability of his image. We find in many rites an actual puppet or animal refashioned or rechosen from year to year. The puppet or animal is a nucleus, a focus for emotions and floating conceptions. If the puppet be a human doll the daimon will take human form, if an animal the god will be theriomorphic. Out of the puppet arose the idol and to the idol certainly among the Greeks the gods owe much of the beauty and the fixity of their forms. Moreover the puppet necessarily fosters the notion of separateness. You may identify yourself with the leader of the band, the common dance and song compel that, but, though the puppet is the focus of your emotion, you know it is *not* you, you are outside it, you contemplate it and you may ultimately worship it. "Le dieu c'est le désir extériorisé, personnifié"[1].

This analysis of the making of a god lends to our outlook on religion generally a singular unity and clarity. Primitive ritual we saw concerned itself with the conservation and furtherance of life, with the nurture of the individual and the reproduction of the race. It was the expression in action of the will to live, the "desire to have life and to have it more abundantly." What ritual expresses in action theology utters in concomitant representation, the gods are images of desire. Religion then in these its two aspects is no longer an attitude towards the unseen and unknown but an emotion towards the known and experienced; it is the

[1] E. Doutté, *Magie et Religion*, 1909, p. 601.

offspring not of fear but of desire, the gods are human will and passion incarnate. It is only when the god is separated from the rite that he dies down into a sterile, immobile perfection[1].

The daimon is born of the rite and with the rite which begat him he is doomed. The gradual dwindling and death of the rite is inevitable. Magic is found again and again to be a failure. It does not bring the expected help and bit by bit it is discredited. According to Dr Frazer it is out of this discrediting of magic that religion is born. Finding himself helpless in the face of natural powers man tries to pull the strings of higher powers and so obtain control. He imagines gods and tries to influence them by prayer and sacrifice. More recent psychology would state the case otherwise. The rite fails but the daimon projected from the rite remains. The presentation once made still holds the imagination. But because of the failure of the rite the presentation is as it were cut loose. Out of this desolate, dehumanized daimon bit by bit develops the god. He is segregated aloof from the worshipper, but he is made in the image of that worshipper, so must be approached by human means, known by experience to be valid with other human beings, and such are prayer, praise and sacrifice.

This separation of god from worshipper, this segregation of the image from the imagination that begot it, is manifestly a late and somewhat artificial stage, but in most religions it develops into a doctrine and even hardens into something of a dogma. Man utterly forgets that his gods are man-begotten and he stresses the gulf that separates him from his own image and presentation. This is very notable in Greek religion. The Greeks being a people of high imaginative power are at the mercy of their own imaginations. Pindar is instant in stressing the gulf that separates humanity from divinity. To seek to become even *like* the gods to him as a Greek savoured of insolence. "Strive not thou to become a god"[2]. "Desire not thou soul of mine, life of the immortals"[3]. And yet oddly enough the old reality and actuality even in Greek religion again and again crops up. Man hungers to be one again with the image he has himself made. The old kinship pulls at

[1] See *Themis*, chapter x. "The Olympians."

[2] Pind. *Ol.* v. 58.

[3] Pind. *Pyth.* III. 59.

him. So in the mystery religions the goal is always reunion with the divine. To the initiate it is said at last: "Thou art become God from Man"[1]. Nothing short of this contents him.

At first it would seem as if this stage of religion in which the image of the god is completely projected and segregated, a stage which for convenience sake we may call *Olympianism*[2], is, even if inevitable, a set back. These projected "Olympians" though they are ideals are by no means ideal; they reflect the passions of their worshippers and not infrequently lag behind them in morality. Jahweh is even more unbridled, licentious, vengeful than his people. The average Athenian would have been ashamed to emulate the amours of Zeus. Moreover the fact that these Olympians are completely segregated, that they are the vehicles of all sorts of primitive tabus and sanctities, even the detail that they are lodged in separate and sacred houses, removes them from all chance of wholesome criticism: "Shall not the Judge of all the world do right?"

What then is the biological function of this theology? Does it in any way serve the purposes of life?

Recent psychology is ready with an answer simple and illuminating. In this way.

We recognize now-a-days two types of thinking. The first which Jung[3] calls "directed thinking" is what we normally mean by thinking. It "imitates reality and seeks to direct it." It is exhausting and is the sort of thinking employed in all scientific research; it looks for adaptations and creates innovations. With that type of thought, which is comparatively late in development, though in embryo it may have existed from the outset, we have little to do in religion.

The second kind of thought is what is called "dream or phantasy-thinking." It turns away from reality and sets free subjective wishes. In regard to adaptation, because of its neglect of reality, it is wholly unproductive. Giving free rein to impulse as it does, it is not exhausting. Freud calls this sort of mind-functioning the "pleasure and pain principle," it is ontogenetically older than

[1] Orphic Gold Tablet. See *Prolegomena*, p. 663.

[2] For a detailed analysis of *Olympianism* and its contrast with daimon-worship see two chapters, IX. and X., in *Themis*, "From Daimon to Olympian" and "The Olympians."

[3] *Psychology of the Unconscious*, translated by B. M. Hinkle, 1919.

directed thinking, it is typified by the mental operations of children and savages and by those of adults in their dreams, reveries and mental disorders.

It is from this early infantile type of dream or phantasy-thinking engendered by the fertility rite that primitive theology and mythology spring. They do not seek adaptation to fact, they turn away from reality and utter unfulfilled desire. "The gods *are* libido," says Jung boldly. If we may be allowed to substitute for the word *libido* with its offensive and misleading connotations some such term as "vital impulse," Jung's proposition may be accepted of all the primitive divinities[1]. We imagine what we lack, the "dying resurrected gods and heroes are but the projected hopes and fears of humanity." The older mind still buried in all of us, the mind of dream-fantasies is, and always has been, incessantly weaving dream-images of imaginary wish fulfilment. The soul in self-defence, unable as yet to adapt itself to its environment, finding that Fate withholds satisfaction in the visible world, would fain

> —grasp this sorry scheme of things entire
> And having shattered it to bits
> Remould it nearer to the heart's desire.

And the imaged agent of this remoulding is the god, "our own vast image, glory crowned."

In like manner arises the myth. The myth is not an attempted explanation of either facts or rites. Its origin is not in "directed thinking," it is not rationalization. The myth is a fragment of the soul life, the dream-thinking of the people, as the dream is the myth of the individual[2]. As Freud says, "it is probable that myths correspond to the distorted residue of the wish phantasies of whole nations, the secularized dreams of young humanity." Mythical tradition it would seem does not set forth any actual account of old events—that is the function of legend—but rather myth acts in such a way that it always reveals a wish-thought common to humanity and constantly rejuvenated.

What then is the biological function of theology and myth?

We hear much now-a-days of the danger of "suppressed com-

[1] In every divinity two factors are observable (1) the "vital impulse" common to all natures, (2) the projection of human desire.

[2] See W. H. R. Rivers, "Dreams and Primitive Culture" in *Bulletin of John Rylands Library, Manchester*, vol. iv. 3 and 4, p. 387.

plexes." It is indeed in the discovery of the danger of these complexes and the methods of their cure that the main originality of the Freudian school consists. Man finds himself in inevitable conflict with some and often many elements of his environment; he shirks the conflict. Just because it is harassing and depressing he forcibly drives it out of his conscious life. But his unconscious life is beyond his control. Into that unconscious stratum the conflict sinks and lives there an uninterrupted life. Now the function of religion is to prevent, to render needless just this suppression of conflict. Man has made for himself representations of beings stronger and more splendid than himself, he has lost all sense that they are really projections of his own desire and to these beings he hands over his conflict, he no longer needs to banish the conflict into the unconscious but gods will see to it and fight on his side: "God is our refuge and strength," "Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you." The function of theology is to keep the conflict that would be submerged in the sphere of the conscious and prevent its development into a mischievous subliminal complex. Theology thus is seen to have high biological value. Probably but for its aid man long before he developed sufficient reason to adapt himself to his environment must have gone under.

It will readily be seen that for this purpose of refuge a god of the Olympian type serves best. A god of the daimon type is too near, too intimate for relief. The more completely segregated is the god the better he serves as safety valve. Modern psychology has in truth dived deep into the "ocean of insanity upon which the little barque of human reason insecurely floats"[1], and knowing this insecurity and this frailty modern psychology teaches us to be careful how we lightly tamper with the faiths of others, how we try to rid a man of what may seem to us a burden unbearable but may be to him an incalculable solace and relief. And further the new psychology sets theology in a new and kinder light. Those of us who are free-thinkers used to think of it rationalistically as a bundle of dead errors, or at best as a subject dead and dry. But conceive of it in this new light and theology becomes a subject

[1] Bertrand Russell, *The practice and theory of Bolshevism*, p. 127.

of passionate and absorbing interest, it is the science of the images of human desire, impulse, aspiration.

Our consideration of primitive theology has then led to the same conclusion as our consideration of primitive ritual. They are in fact but two faces or modes of the same impulse—the impulse to the conservation of life. Personification, theology is but a natural, inevitable utterance of human desire. As Shakespeare had it long ago

> Such tricks hath strong imagination,
> That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
> It comprehends some bringer of that joy.

It is not surprising therefore that recent writers on religion should tend to define religion itself in terms no longer of knowledge and belief but in terms of life. Thus in *The Tree of Life*[1] Ernest Crawley writes, the permanent source of religion is "the instructive affirmation of life," and again, "the primary function of religion is to affirm and consecrate life." Religion "consecrates also the means of life....it surrounds with an insulation of taboo those critical moments and periods in which the sources of life are in danger—birth, puberty, marriage, sickness and death." God is in very literal truth the Desire of the Nations[2]. "In its widest sense," says a recent American writer[3], "religion means for any species that degree of interest that it can experience in what makes for its own continuity," and more explicitly: "Religion is the greatest thing in the world of living men. *Twentieth century religion is an enlightened consciousness of the impulse that makes for species continuity, and an intelligent concern for all the values that minister to this end.*" How far such a statement is adequate we have now to consider.

[1] Pp. 258 and 270.

[2] I do not propose here even to resume my discussion of *mana* in *Themis*, pp. 65–69, and *Alpha and Omega*, pp. 167–173. It is sufficiently obvious that Freud's *libido* and primitive *mana* are roughly commensurate. To primitive man the stuff of the world is neither mental nor material but—as to the new psychologists—a neutral stuff or force out of which both are compounded. See Bertrand Russell, *Analysis of Mind*, passim—a book which only appeared when these sheets were in proof.

[3] Orlando O. Norris in "What is Religion," from *The American Schoolmaster*, Jan. 1919. Ypsilanti, Michigan.

III

THE RELIGION OF TO-DAY[1]

VIA CRUCIS, VIA LUCIS

PRIMITIVE RITUAL, the ritual of Totemism, of King-Gods, of Initiation Ceremonies, of Fertility Dramas, is dead to-day or lingers on only among remote savages and in obscure country haunts. It has been driven out inch by inch by science, by "directed" as opposed to phantasy thinking. The ritual even of sacrifice that once played so large a part in man's life is dead and even the custom of prayer for material goods languishes. In like fashion primitive divinities, daimons of the year, have died with the rites that begot them, and divinities of the "Olympian" type are losing their hold. They are seen for what they are, *objets d'art*, creations of man's imagination, they no longer are incumbent on man's life, imposing an obligation of obedience; as ideals they may command adoration, they can no longer compel worship[2]. Jahweh is seen to be a projection of Hebrew desire and takes his place side by side with Zeus, Poseidon and Apollo. Is this then the end? Is our twentieth century religion only an "enlightened consciousness of the impulse that makes for species continuity," and as such is it best rechristened Science?

The essence of Modernism the Pope himself has told us is Immanence, and the statement is instructive. Immanence is of course no new thing, it is as old as S. Augustine[3]. "I have gone astray," he says, "like a Sheep that was lost, seeking thee with great anxiety without, when yet thou art within, and dwelleth in my soul, if it desire thy presence. I wandered about the Villages and Streets of the City of this world, enquiring for thee everywhere, and found thee not: because I expected to meet that abroad which all the while I had at home....." And thus, after consulting the creatures abroad, "I came home at last, descended

[1] Some portion of this chapter was read before the Society of 'Heretics' on Feb. 27, 1921.

[2] For this distinction between art and religion, see my *Ancient Art and Ritual*, p. 227.

[3] *Meditations*, trans. Stanhope, 1704, p. 224.

into myself," and at last, "Thanks to that light, which discovered thee to Me and Me to myself. For in finding and in knowing myself I find and know thee." There lives no mystic who has not experienced Immanence, and assuredly to S. Augustine the City of God is the City of Mansoul. So now-a-days God is no longer envisaged as external, as Creator, King, Judge, Ruler, Lawgiver, or even as Father and Saviour, nor even as the "Friend behind phenomena," He has gone inward, He has become the "undying human memory, the increasing human will." Henceforth the Kingdom of God is within us[1].

For the new Immanentist, creeds have become all but insignificant, they are to him not living expressions of truth apprehended but ancient barriers, dams artificially built to stem the inrush of living waters. The whole centre of gravity has in fact shifted from authority to experience. The new Immanence is nearer akin to the old daimon-dance than to any ordered Olympian ritual of prayer and sacrifice. It is very near to that primal mystery, the impulse of life, which it was the function of primitive religion to conserve. Are we then to accept this solution that the Immanent God is nothing but the mystery of the whole of things and that the function of modern religion is the realization of self within the limits of the community? And if so why seek for god rather within the limits of the human self than in external nature? The answer is that only there can we find him. In the natural world we find mystery enough, but also laws appealing to our minds, in the biological world we find a law which is eternal change, in the world of the human spirit alone we find the functions of value and choice and these functions are religious. Primitive religion aimed at the impulsion and conservation of life; the religion of to-day aims at the bettering of life, by the exercise of the function of choice and the practice of asceticism. After this fashion.

The core and essence of religion to-day is the practice of asceticism. Concerned as we have been hitherto with religion as the impulsion of life this may seem almost a paradox; it is really a very simple and obvious truth. Physical life once secured by civilization and the general advance of science, religion turns not

[1] See J. E. Harrison, *Rationalism and Reaction*, Conway Memorial Lecture, 1919, p. 19.

to the impulsion of life but to its betterment, and the betterment of life involves asceticism—the expulsion of evil. And be it remembered asceticism as we have already seen lies at the very basis of primitive religion in the form of tabu. Tabu in primitive days was imposed by the group in the interests of the group[1], tabu to-day in the form of asceticism is imposed by the individual in the interests of his own spiritual life, of what we call his soul.

Perhaps it needed a Russian philosopher writing in the Russian tongue to see this simple truth and get at the true biological function of asceticism, for language always thinks ahead of conscious ratiocination. The Russians have two ways of making the simple statement, "I am ashamed." They say either "to me is shame," literally, "to me is cold shuddering," or "to me is consciousness"[2], "I am conscious." To the Russian and to the greatest of their philosophers, Solovióv, shame is the sign manual of human consciousness and shame issues in asceticism. The normal animal save where artificialized by man knows no shame. Bodily facts, whether of nutrition or sex, have for him no embarrassment. Of such facts man is and perennially has been ashamed, not because they are *morally* wrong, i.e. non-social—they are in fact highly social and necessary—but simply because they are of his animal body, they are what S. Paul calls "carnal." Shame is to man at once his means of salvation and his high prerogative.

This new religion, this bettering of life, involves conflict. It is the setting of the will towards what Bergson calls the "ascending wave" of the *élan vital* against the descending wave which he calls matter. We belong in part to that descending wave, hence the conflict, its pull is always upon us even to the rending of flesh and spirit. The conflict cannot be avoided. It belongs to the conscious part of us. Psycho-analysis has its work to do. But,

[1] The social character of religion has been well brought out and possibly somewhat over-emphasized in a recent book by George Willis Cooke, *The Social Evolution of Religion.* Boston, 1920.

[2] МНѢ СТЫДНО or МНѢ СОВѢСТНО. A good general account of Solovióv's life and philosophy which have had immense influence in Russia will be found in J. B. Séverac, *Vladimir Solovióv,* in the series *Grands philosophes français et étrangers,* published by Louis Michaud. One important work appears in English under the title of *The Justification of the Good,* translated by Natalie A. Duddington. Constable.

when all your suppressed complexes have been dragged to light and all your subconscious dunghill is spaded out in front of you, your conscious self has still to choose the higher and refuse the lower. It is useless to deny like a Christian Scientist the fact that evil, i.e. the lesser good, exists—we must frankly face its existence and refuse participation.

But why should the flesh be shameful? This is the cardinal question. Simply because there is in man something else which is rarer, finer, what we call "better," than the flesh—that is the spirit. Simply because in the eternal nature of things *the better is the enemy of the good*, the better is ashamed of the good. Simply because we are, as human beings, conscious of a scale of values, a lower and a higher, a better and a worse. This scale of values we find not in external nature but in our own souls, and in our own souls henceforth is our religion—our conduct towards others is matter for our morality. Asceticism is the setting out of the soul towards the higher value. Religion means to us now, at least to me, not cosmology, not a story told to account for how things are, not ritual or theology, the various projections of our own unsatisfied desire; religion means a way of life possible because we are not only animals but human animals; it means the sense that you and I are good but that we can and mean to be better, and that in order to be better we will if need be—and need is—practise asceticism, suffer sharp pain and desolation in the death, the crucifixion of animal desires. All religion in all time is concerned with life, the religion of to-day with the betterment of life.

But, thank Heaven, asceticism is not all or chiefly that depressing thing, negation. The negations of the Decalogue died with the jealous God who dictated them—died, that is, as religious impulses. The new Immanence is vital, creative, it says: "you, that is the best in you, is one with God, *is* God, your work *is* the divine activity, 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do do it with thy might.'" In the old days most religiously minded people were troubled by the thought that they were not "devoting themselves to others"; self-sacrifice was felt to be incumbent, the only road to peace. Hence the constant itch for philanthropy. Now religion says all things are possible and permissible, only remember

there is a better as well as a good. The instincts are good and remain the prime motors to thought. The personal emotions are good, the best of which the spiritually undeveloped are capable, yet in the exercise of these you but strengthen your selfhood. But in science, that is the disinterested search after truth, in art which is creative self-absorption, you lose yourself in something bigger and more permanent and these henceforth rank as of the highest religious value.

Asceticism is then not only resistance to the descending wave, it is also, it is chiefly, the rising on the upward wave, buoyant, triumphant. To the Greek asceticism is "the attuning of an instrument," not the mortification of the flesh. It is just the "training or discipline that is necessary for eminence in art, in athletics as for eminence in virtue. The Greek words ἄσκησις, ἀρετή level these distinctions"[1].

To conclude, it is in the spirit of the purest religion that a poet tells of the ascetic—a poet who at least for a time renounced human for discarnate joy—Keats, who, to quote the words of a recent critic[2], was "great in his actual poetic achievement, great in his possession of the rarest faculty of all, the power and the desire to make his nature single, to refine his own being, in the words of Anton Chehov, 'to squeeze the slave out of himself.'"

Keats writes to his sister-in-law:

> Notwithstanding your happiness and your recommendations I hope I shall never marry. Though the most beautiful creature were waiting for me at the end of a journey or a walk, though the carpet were of silk, the curtain of the morning clouds, the chairs stuffed with cygnets' down, the food manna, the wine above claret, the windows opening on Winandermere, I should not feel—or rather my happiness would not be so fine, as my solitude is sublime.
>
> There, instead of what I have described, there is a sublimity to welcome me home. The roaring of the wind is my wife and the stars through my window-pane are my children.....I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone, but in a thousand worlds. No sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me and serve my spirit the office which is equivalent to a king's bodyguard.

[1] J. A. K. Thomson, *Greeks and Barbarians*, p. 110.

[2] Mr Middleton Murry, *Nation and Athenaeum*, Feb. 26, 1921.

And yet, he ends:

> I have not the least contempt for my species.... and my greatest elevations of soul leave me every time more humbled.

Is this asceticism a thing cold and dead? Hear Keats again:

> There is an awful warmth about my heart—like a load of immortality.

An awful warmth about his heart. Yes, and an awful light about his head. *Via Crucis, Via Lucis.*

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